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Land Management
for
Non-Game
Birds

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Birds have long served man for sport, food, feathers, as well as in their natural role as destroyers of insects and rodents. As man has prospered, birds have become less of a necessity; but from an aesthetic standpoint, birds are of more importance today than ever before in history. Their beauty, graceful flight, melodious songs and amusing antics are responsible for the expenditure of large sums of money each year just for the purpose of observing these creatures of nature.

At least 160 species of birds are residents of Georgia. There are several hundred more species that pass through the state during spring and fall migration. Information in this guide is intended for use in attracting the common upland non-game species to homes, both in farm and urban areas.

Life Histories

The life span of most upland non-game birds is 3 to 8 years; however, many die within the first and second year. Banding studies show that many birds return to the same nesting areas each year, many times to the same tree, shrub, or nesting box. Migratory species frequently return to the same wintering area or even the same feeder. Such facts assure rewards for your efforts to provide them with safe and favorable areas in which to feed, escape their enemies, and rear their young.

Food

Food is the most important item in a bird's life. They eat a variety of animal and vegetable matter. The availability, abundance, and variety of

food governs the abundance and variety of bird life inhabiting any given area. Therefore, landowners wishing to have birds as constant companions should plan in a manner to assure a dependable year-round food supply. Some plants favorable for this purpose are contained in the following table.

Trees

Beech. Crow (common), jay (blue), nuthatches, titmouse (tufted). When used: winter.

Blackcherry. Bluebird, cardinal, catbird, crow (common), flicker, flycatcher (great crested), jay (blue), kingbird (eastern), oriole (Baltimore), phoebe, robin, sapsucker, starling, tanager (summer), thrush (wood), titmouse (tufted), vireos, woodpecker. When used: summer.

Blackgum. Flicker, mockingbird, robin, thrush (wood), woodpecker. When used: summer and fall.

Dogwood. Bluebird, cardinal, catbird, flicker, kingbird (eastern), mockingbird, robin, sapsucker, tanager (summer), thrasher (brown), thrush (wood), vireos, woodpecker. When used: fall.

Holly. Cardinal, catbird, robin, thrush (hermit), waxwing (cedar). When used: winter.

Mulberry. Bluebird, bunting (indigo), cardinal, catbird, crow (fish), flycatcher (great crested), grackle (common), jay (blue), kingbird (eastern), mockingbird, oriole (Baltimore, orchard), robin, starling, tanager (summer), thrasher (brown), thrush (wood), titmouse (tufted), towhee, vireos, waxwing (cedar), woodpecker. When used: spring and summer.

Oak. Crow, grackle, jay (blue), titmouse, woodpecker. When used: winter.

Pecan. Cardinal, chickadee, crow, grackle, nuthatch, woodpecker, wren (Carolina), When used: winter.

Pine. Blackbird (redwinged), chickadee (Carolina), jay (blue), kingbird (eastern), meadowlark, nuthatch, towhee, warbler (myrtle, pine), and woodpecker. When used: winter.

Redcedar. Finch (purple), gnatcatcher, jay (blue), robin, warbler (myrtle), waxwing (cedar). When used: winter.

Sweetgum. Blackbird (redwinged), finch (purple), goldfinch. When used: fall.

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Shrubs

Catoneaster. Catbird, cardinal, robin, mockingbird, waxwing (cedar). When used: winter.

Cherry elaeagnus. Cardinal, catbird, chat, robin, thrasher (brown). When used: summer and fall.

Elder. Bunting (indigo), catbird, chat, kingbird (western), mockingbird, oriole (Baltimore), phoebe, robin, starling, vireos, woodpecker. When used: summer.

Farkleberry. Bluebird, catbird, chat, flicker, flycatcher (great crested), jay (blue), oriole (Baltimore, orchard), phoebe, titmouse (tufted), towhee. When used: fall and winter.

Fig. Catbird, crow (fish), grackle (boat-tailed), hummingbird, jay, mockingbird, oriole (orchard), sparrow (house), thrasher (brown), warbler (myrtle), woodpecker (red-headed). When used: summer.

Hawthorn. Cardinal, flicker, jay (blue), mockingbird, sparrow (fox), waxwing (cedar). When used: winter.

Photinia. Waxwing (cedar). When used: winter.

Privet (Chinese, glossy, Japanese). Bluebird, finch (purple), mockingbird, robin, thrasher (brown), waxwing (cedar). When used: winter.

Pyracantha. Cardinal, mockingbird, robin, waxwing (cedar). When used: winter.

Yaupon. Waxwing (cedar). When used: winter.

Vines

Blackberry or Dewberry. Bluebird, bunting (indigo), cardinal, catbird, chat, crow (fish), flicker, flycatcher (great crested), kingbird (eastern), mockingbird, oriole (Baltimore, orchard), phoebe, robin, sparrow (field, fox, Henslow's), tanager (summer), thrasher (brown), thrush (wood), titmouse (tufted), towhee, vireos. When used: spring and summer.

Creeper (Virginia). Bluebird, catbird, flicker, sapsucker, sparrow (house), thrush (wood), vireos, woodpecker. When used: summer and fall.

Grape. Cardinal, catbird, flicker, grackle (common), jay (blue), mockingbird, oriole (Baltimore), robin, tanager (summer), thrasher (brown), thrush (wood), titmouse (tufted), woodpecker. When used: fall.

Rose (multiflora). Mockingbird, sparrow (fox, song), waxwing (cedar), cardinal, robin. When used: winter.

Other plants

Barnyard Grass. Blackbird, bobolink, cardinal, cowbird. When used: fall.

Millet (Brown top and Proso). Cowbird, finch (purple), goldfinch, junco, sparrow. When used: fall.

Pokeberry. Bluebird, cardinal, catbird, crow (fish), flycatcher (great crested, scissor-tailed), jay (blue), mockingbird, robin, thrasher (brown), waxwing (cedar, woodpecker). When used: summer.

Oats. Blackbird, bobolink, bunting (indigo), cardinal, cowbird, crow (common, fish), grackle (common), grosbeak (blue), junco, sparrow, starling, towhee. When used: spring.

Ragweed. Blackbird, bunting (indigo), chickadee (Carolina), cowbird, finch (purple), goldfinch, junco, sparrow, towhee. When used: winter.

Sorghum. Blackbird, cardinal, cowbird, crow (common), grackle (common), grosbeak (blue), meadowlark, sparrow. When used: fall.

Sunflower. Blackbird, cardinal, chickadee (Carolina), finch (purple), grackle (common), grosbeak (blue), jay (blue), junco, meadowlark, nuthatches, sparrow, titmouse (tufted), towhee, woodpecker. When used: fall and winter.

Wheat. Blackbird, bobolink, bunting (indigo), cardinal, cowbird, crow (common fish), grackle (common), grosbeak (blue), jay, junco, meadowlark, sparrow, thrasher (brown), towhee. When used: spring.

Artificial Feeding

Retaining or creating plant communities will assure that some birds will be present throughout the year. The kinds and numbers of birds can be increased through artificial feeding. Feeding is especially important in winter during periods of inclement weather. Again, variety in the kinds of food offered will bring a variety of birds to the home.

The table below is a guide to the foods attractive to more common birds:

Seeds (sunflower, millet, wheat, cracked corn): Titmouse, junco, sparrow, cardinal, towhee, bluejay.

Fruit (raisins, cut apples, bananas): Bluebird, brown thrasher, mockingbird, robin.

Suet: Nuthatches, wrens, woodpeckers.

Cover

Cover is essential to attract and retain birds to any given area. Birds require cover for protection from enemies, weather, for nesting, roosting, loafing, and feeding. The wider the spectrum of vegetative conditions, from ground cover to tall trees, the wider the spectrum of bird species that will be attracted. Some birds feed and nest primarily on the ground; some nest in hollow trees. Others frequent thick areas of shrubs and vines, while some prefer large trees.

Planting can be a part of a pleasing landscape around the home. When selecting plants, choose those that will also provide food. Many of the plants previously mentioned will serve this dual purpose.

Artificial Cover

Little can be done to provide artificial cover for birds, with the exception of housing for nesting. Properly located houses of appropriate size are attractive to such birds as bluebird, chickadee, crested fly-catcher, nuthatch, tufted titmouse, woodpecker, and Carolina wren. Information on building bird houses is readily available from many sources, such as feed and seed stores, hardware stores, or encyclopedias.

Water

Many birds live around water and most require it daily. If water is not available nearby, it can be provided in pools or bird baths. Baths should be 2 to 3 inches deep, and the bottom rough to prevent slipping as the birds alight and spring to flight.

